

# DELL

## HATS OFF TO INSTANT SAVINGS!

# FREE FLAT PANEL

upgrade on select Dell™ PCs.

# \$100 OFF INSTANTLY

Up to on select Dell PCs.

Combined offers  
valid 5/20-5/25.

## NO INTEREST UNTIL 2006!

For well-qualified customers.\*

SAVE  
\$100

14.1" XGA

### NEW Inspiron™ 1200 Notebook

#### Value Solution

- Intel® Celeron® M Processor 350 (1.30GHz, 1MB Cache, 400MHz FSB)
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition
- 256MB Shared\* DDR SDRAM
- 30GB\* Hard Drive
- 24x CD Burner/DVD Combo Drive
- Integrated Intel® Graphics Media Accelerator 900
- 6 Months of AOL® Membership Included\*
- 90-Day Limited Warranty\*, Mail-In Service and Tech Support

Pre-Savings

**\$699**

Now Only

**\$599**

after \$100 off  
or as low  
as \$18/mo.\*

E-Value Code: 03385-D80506

Total savings = \$100 instant savings

### UPGRADE THIS PC TO A \$139 POWER PACK FOR ONLY

- 40GB\* Hard Drive
- 15" XGA Display
- Dell 1350 Wireless PC Card (802.11b/g)

E-Value Code: 03385-D80508

### PROTECT IT FOR \$189

- 3-Year Limited Warranty\*, At-Home Service\* and Tech Support

### mension™ 3000 Desktop

#### Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor

3.06GHz, 1MB L2 Cache, 533MHz FSB

Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition

256MB Shared\* DDR SDRAM

30GB\* Hard Drive

Free Upgrade to 15" E153FP Flat Panel

Display (\$129 Value)

Integrated Intel® Extreme Graphics 2

24x CD-ROM Drive

6 Months of AOL® Membership Included\*

90-Day Limited Warranty\*, At-Home Service\*

and Tech Support

Pre-Savings

**\$499**

Now Only

**\$399**

after \$100 off  
or as low  
as \$18/mo.\*

E-Value Code: 03385-D50504

Total savings = \$100 instant savings + \$129 flat panel

### UPGRADE THIS PC TO A \$188 POWER PACK FOR ONLY

and Get FREE Shipping (3-5 Day) (\$99 Value) – Online Only

- 48x CD Burner (2nd Bay)
- 15-Month Subscription to McAfee® SecurityCenter™ (VirusScan®, Firewall, Spyware Removal)
- Dell A425 Stereo Speakers with Subwoofer

E-Value Code: 03385-D50505

### PROTECT IT FOR \$119

- 3-Year Limited Warranty\*, At-Home Service\* and Tech Support

### Dell recommends Microsoft® Windows® XP Professional

Get more out of  
your PC with  
Dell Photo All-in-One  
Printers starting at  
**\$79**



For maximum  
digital entertainment,  
Dell recommends the  
high-performance Intel®  
Pentium® 4 Processor

## 2 ways to shop

## Call 1-800-753-0530

to shop by phone 7 a.m.-11 p.m. CST

## Click www.dell.com/life

anytime for savings online

GET MORE OUT OF NOW.

DELL

Hearing/speech impaired: 1-877-DELL-TTY (toll-free)

**TERMS:** AOL TRIAL MEMBERSHIP MUST BE USED WITHIN 6 MONTHS OF REGISTRATION FOR AOL. TO AVOID BEING CHARGED FUTURE AOL FEES, SIMPLY CANCEL BEFORE 6 MONTH TRIAL PERIOD ENDS. Premium services carry surcharges and communication surcharges may apply in certain areas including Alaska, even during trial time. Members using dial-up access may incur telephone charges on their phone bill depending on their calling plan and location, even during trial time. For new AOL members age 18 or older who are U.S. residents, major billing method required. High-speed access requires purchase of a separate high-speed connection from your local cable or telephone company. High-speed connections are not available in all areas. AOL may be optimizing some of your computer settings to enhance your experience on AOL. America Online, AOL, and the Winning Man icon are registered trademarks of America Online, Inc. All other names are trademarks or service marks of their respective holders. ©2005 America Online, Inc. All rights reserved. **PRICING/AVAILABILITY:** Prices, specifications, availability and terms of offers may change without notice. Taxes, fees, and shipping and handling charges, other than systems free 3-5 day shipping offer, if applicable, are extra, and vary. Offers may be combined with other select offers or discounts. Valid for U.S. Dell Home Systems Co. new purchases only. Free 3-5 day shipping offer available in Continental (except Alaska) U.S. only. Electronics and accessories purchases not included in systems free shipping offer. Dell cannot be responsible for pricing or other errors, and reserves the right to cancel orders arising from such errors. **SHARED SDRAM:** Up to 64MB of system memory may be allocated to support graphics, depending on system memory size and other factors. **HARD DRIVE:** For hard drives, GB means 1 billion bytes, actual capacity varies with preloaded material and operating environment and will be less. **LIMITED WARRANTY:** Dell can get a copy of our limited warranties and guarantees by writing Dell USA LP, Attn: Warranties, One Dell Way, Round Rock, TX 78682. To purchase warranty only or for information on other service options please call 1-800-915-3355 or visit [www.dell.com/termsandconditions](http://www.dell.com/termsandconditions). **AT-HOME SERVICE:** At-Home service provided via third-party contract with customer. Technician will be dispatched, if necessary, following phone-based troubleshooting after the next business day. Availability varies. **PURCHASE PLAN:** **DELL PREFERRED ACCOUNT:** Offered by CIT Bank to qualified U.S. residents with approved credit. Creditworthiness determined by lender. Taxes, fees, and shipping and handling charges are extra, and vary. **NO INTEREST PROMOTIONAL FEATURE:** FOR WELL QUALIFIED CUSTOMERS,\* as determined by lender. Available on purchases of \$500 or more made from March 29, 2005 through May 31, 2005. Interest accrues during the promotional period and will be added to your account if balance not paid by January 1, 2006. Minimum monthly payments are required. For accounts not paid in full by January 1, 2006, account balance and purchases will be subject to the Standard Rate (15.74% - 17.74% variable APR, as of April 1, 2005, depending on creditworthiness). Minimum monthly payments of \$15 or 3% of account balance, whichever is greater. **MCAfee SECURITYCENTER:** Standard subscription is for 12 months. This month-end offer allows you to take full advantage of the free 90-day trial period that comes standard with your system purchase. This offer is only available when purchased at point of sale and is not available after you receive your system. **TRADEMARKS/COPYRIGHT NOTICES:** Intel, Intel Inside, Intel Inside logo, Intel Centrino logo, Celeron, Intel Xeon, Intel SpeedStep, Itanium, Pentium, and Pentium III Xeon are trademarks or registered trademarks of Intel Corporation or its subsidiaries in the United States and other countries. Microsoft and Windows are registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and other countries. ©2005 Dell Computer Corporation. All rights reserved.

# LIFE

AMERICA'S WEEKEND MAGAZINE

## THE ULTIMATE HOME MAKEOVER QUICK FIXES FOR EVERY ROOM

(You'll be done tomorrow!)

## AT HOME WITH ELLEN

"Every time  
people get  
together  
at my house,  
we end up  
dancing"

Roller girl: DeGeneres  
spruces up LIFE



# Today's The day

I discovered that BLT also stands for  
Because it takes Less Time.

HORMEL® fully cooked bacon.  
Ready in seconds so you can get back  
to what's really important.



*Today's flavor*

**Hormel**



## DEPARTMENTS

**7 Weekend Life:** *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition's* Ty Pennington on modeling and remodeling; four great products to occupy your kids on long summer drives; medicine's new weapon against sun damage

**10 At Home:** The secret of perfect biscuits

**11 Milestone:** Las Vegas turns a very swinging 100

**26 Picture Puzzle:** Spot the differences

## FEATURES

### 12 My Favorite Room

Ellen DeGeneres shows us her "fun house" of a home office and takes our decorating quiz. *As told to Margy Rochlin. Photographs by Guy Aroch.*

### 16 Our Search for the Simple Life

Novelist *Jacquelyn Mitchard* and her family designed and built the house of their dreams. Less than a year later, they walked away from it.

### 18 Ten Home Projects . . .

Got an hour (or less)? Transform your home, room by room. *By Dan Shaw*

## ON THE COVER

A roller-wielding Ellen DeGeneres puts a little LIFE into her Hollywood Hills home. Photographed by Guy Aroch. Here and on pages 12 through 14: makeup by Meghan McClain/Bardeen Agency; styling by Wendi Ferreira for SoloArtists; hair by Matthew Shields/Wall Group; prop styling by Oscar Perez/Partos Company.



## PICTURE OF THE WEEK

Forget shuffleboard. A favorite pastime of residents of the Providence Marianwood nursing home, outside Seattle, is riding Harleys. Members of a local Harley Owners Group visit every six months and take seniors—like 90-year-old Ailie Little—for a few loops around the parking lot. Residents are so hog-wild, says coordinator Diane Bixler, "this is right up there with Christmas for them!" PHOTOGRAPH BY HARLEY SOLTES

# WEEKEND LIFE

GREAT IDEAS FOR YOUR NEXT 48 HOURS

NOW PLAYING...

## TY PENNINGTON

The star of ABC's *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* enters the home-furnishings biz. Here's what he's got to say about design, carpentry, and... pig parts.

On revamping a room on a small budget: Just add one element that goes *bam!*—like a bedroom could be subtle but the bedding can really lighten it up. You don't want to overdo it, say, with floral on the walls *and* on the bedding.

On the biggest misconception people have about him: People are beginning to realize that I'm a designer. They thought I was just a carpenter, but my idols are Charles and Ray Eames, who designed classic modern furniture that was affordable—and that's what I'm all about.

On how he worked as a model *and* a remodeler: I needed cash to get through art school—that's how I got into modeling. I was the guy hired to make people laugh so they could get shots of everyone laughing. But when that work slows down, you go, "What do I do now?" So I fell back on carpentry to pay the bills.

On his inner Keith Richards: I've had several bands—the first one was Butt Jowl Picnic, which are all parts of a pig. I had a solo act called Barney—I played a drum machine. Now I just play for families on the show. I'm a horrible guitarist, but music helps me relax.

On his favorite thing to do with a mallet: When I'm hanging out with friends, I turn it into a creative evening—like playing extreme croquet, where you bounce the ball off trees. I make it exciting for everyone. I'm a Libra, man, that's what I do.

—CAITLIN COSTIN



Champing at the bits: *Extreme*'s Pennington

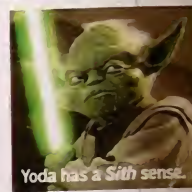
## LIFE5

OUR EDITORS PICK WHAT TO WATCH, READ & LISTEN TO

### 1 MOVIE

**STAR WARS EPISODE III: REVENGE OF THE SITH** (Lucasfilm/20th Century Fox)

One movie, two momentous events: Natalie Portman gives birth to Luke and Leia, and Hayden Christensen slips into that scary Darth Vader getup.



### 2 TV

**DESPERATE HOUSEWIVES** (ABC; Sunday, 9 p.m.) The season finale offers some closure on Mary Alice's suicide, plus the Wisteria Lane gang gets a new neighbor to snoop on: Emmy-winner Alfre Woodard.

### 3 BOOK

**THE CLOSERS**, BY MICHAEL CONNELLY (Little, Brown; \$27)

Connelly's in top form once again with this tight-as-a-noose tale of retired homicide detective Harry Bosch, who returns to the LAPD to investigate a 20-year-old unsolved murder.

### 4 MUSIC

**TOBY KEITH: HONKYTONK UNIVERSITY** (Dreamworks Records)

The burly Keith shows his sensitive side with these touching, hand-dog-cowboy songs. The highlight—"She Ain't Hooked on Me No More"—is a weepy duet with country legend Merle Haggard.

### 5 WEB

**101COOKBOOKS.COM**

Part blog, part culinary school, this engaging site lets you follow San Francisco photographer Heidi Swanson as she progresses through 100-plus cookbooks, one good recipe at a time.

—MATT HENDRICKSON

CELEBRATING

# One Enchanted Evening

SANTA CLARA, CALIFORNIA

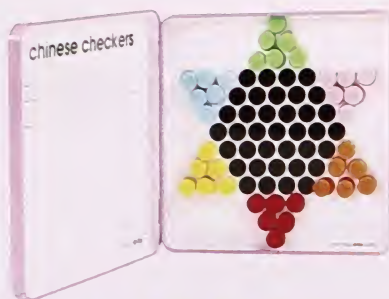
A high-school prom is huge in a teenager's life. But when your living room is your classroom and your parents are your teachers, who's going to throw you a fancy dance? Such was the situation for homeschooler Jessica Noyer, 15. "I have friends in public school, and I could have gone to their prom," says Jessica. "But it wouldn't have been *my* prom." So Jessica petitioned the principal: her mother, Delaine. The extended Noyer family decided to throw a year-end dance for



Gulmert revels among the homeschoolers at their prom.

homeschool students throughout California. Last month, 80 teens put on their best threads and hit the dance floor in Santa Clara; most were homeschoolers, but a few guests were from public and private schools, and so could compare proms. "Pretty cool," says Julien Gulmert, 17, a junior at Pescadero High and, on this occasion, the date of homeschooler Sarah Farmer. "It was far more extravagant than the dances I'm used to. And the choice of music was better too." —MEETA AGRAWAL

Send word of your upcoming festivities—weddings, reunions, etc.—at least one month in advance to [celebrating@life.com](mailto:celebrating@life.com).



## ▲ Low-Tech Excitement

Butterfingers board-gamers will be stuck on Goplay magnetic Chinese checkers. Other classic games also available (\$7\*; at Barnes & Noble stores).

## SHOPPING

# Travel Companions

Millions of Americans will hit the road this summer. Many of them will be siblings punching each other in the arm. Give those little brawlers something else to do.



## ▲ Shooting Star

The kid-friendly Kodak EasyShare C300 digital camera doesn't munch batteries (or film!), and the image quality is good enough to satisfy Mom and Dad (\$100; at [www.kodak.com](http://www.kodak.com)).

## Drivin' Theater ▼

Parents rave about the Panasonic DVD-LS50 portable DVD player's three-hour battery life and tilting LCD screen, which can hang from a car's front seat—keeping it out of Junior's reach (\$400; at Best Buy stores).



## ▲ Backseat Drawing

Keep preschool Picassos occupied (and well rested) with the Crayola Travel Turtle lap desk: It comes with crayons, plus a detachable pillow for nap time (\$20; at Wal-Mart stores).

—DAVID G. ALLAN

\*All prices approximate

# DVD CLUB

FOOD, FRIENDS, AND ONE FUN FILM TO DISCUSS.



THE FLICK: *The Longest Yard* (Paramount Home Entertainment; R: 121 minutes)

## THE PLOT:

In this scrappy action-dramedy that paved the way for 1970s sports cinema (*Slap Shot*, *The Bad News Bears*, *Rocky*), Burt Reynolds stars as former pro quarterback Paul Crewe, who lands himself in the big house for stealing his girlfriend's car. While inside, he's coerced into organizing a guards-versus-prisoners gridiron match, but here's the catch: If Crewe throws the game, he'll make parole.

## TALKING POINTS:

1. Steroid use, point-shaving, and racial politics are all touched on in the film. Has sports changed much in the past 30 years?
2. An updated version of *The Longest Yard*—with Adam Sandler playing Crewe—debuts on May 27. Discuss movie remakes that you think have been as good as the originals.
3. When this movie was made, Reynolds was considered a sex symbol. How has Hollywood's concept of the male ideal evolved—or not—over the years?
4. "This was the best football movie ever

made," says ESPN.com columnist Bill Simmons in a DVD extra. Given the worthy football films out there—from *North Dallas Forty* to *Remember the Titans*—do you think it's still the best?

## WHAT TO SERVE:

While a plate of prison-style beans and white bread might be fitting, go with tailgating faves like nachos and buffalo wings.

—D.G.A.

Coming next week: *The Aviator*

Got a suggestion for the DVD Club? Write to us at [dvdclub@life.com](mailto:dvdclub@life.com).

## ASK MR. KNOWITALL

YOUR DINNER-TABLE ARGUMENTS  
SETTLED, ONCE AND FOR ALL

### What's the origin of baseball's seventh-inning stretch?

The most colorful theory credits our twenty-seventh president, William Howard Taft. Legend has it that in 1910, the 300-pound chief executive was watching a ball game (and presumably ingesting large quantities of peanuts and Cracker Jack) when he began to feel constrained by his cramped wooden chair and stood up to stretch. The crowd, thinking Taft was leaving the stadium, rose out of deference. A few minutes later, Taft sat down. The crowd sat down too. And voilà!—a sporting tradition was born.

Perhaps. It seems the first known reference to the seventh-inning stretch actually comes much earlier: In an 1869 letter, Cincinnati Red Stockings player Harry Wright described an interesting ritual that had been spontaneously occurring at games—"spectators all arise between halves of the seventh inning, extend



their legs and arms and sometimes walk about." Some baseball historians attribute the custom to Brother Jasper, the first coach of Manhattan College's baseball team. During a tense 1882 game he noticed the fans getting agitated, so the brother, who was the school's order-keeping prefect of discipline, mandated a seventh-inning unwinding of the limbs. It worked so well he adopted it permanently.

Either way, it seems the Taft story is a bunch of hokey. On the other hand, the one about Taft getting stuck in a presidential bathtub and needing the head butler to pull him out? That one's true.

—A.J. JACOBS, AUTHOR OF *THE KNOW-IT-ALL*

Got a question no one else can answer? E-mail it to [knowitall@life.com](mailto:knowitall@life.com). Because of the volume of submissions, not all e-mails will receive responses.

## HEALTH

### Secret Sun Damage

More and more skin doctors are looking at photography as a way to get Americans to slather on sunscreen. Ultraviolet cameras can glimpse into the skin's deepest layers, where sun damage lurks before emerging as wrinkles, sunspots, and even precancerous lesions. Scientists at the perpetually sunny University of California at San Diego have found that students who undergo this imaging are more likely to change their attitude about tanning. Even those with seemingly flawless skin are shocked by the damage that's occurred. A dermatologist can tell you more about this technology; find one at [www.aad.org](http://www.aad.org). —CAROLINE PALMER



Something's burning.

## You left your job. Why is your 401(k) still working there?

### Roll it over to Schwab today.

We make it easy and smart to roll over your 401(k).

Easy—a Schwab Rollover Specialist will guide you every step of the way.

Smart—you can choose one of five Schwab Portfolios,<sup>™</sup> designed to instantly diversify your Rollover IRA.

And for a limited time, open a new Schwab Rollover IRA and pay no annual account fee. So act now.

**No annual IRA account fee.**

**Act now on this limited-time offer.**

**Call 1-866-645-4125 today.**

*charles* SCHWAB

Schwab is waiving the \$50.00 annual IRA account service fee on any new Rollover IRA opened through this promotion by June 30, 2005. New Rollover IRAs can be opened for any eligible member of a client's household. A minimum of \$10,000 is required to invest in Schwab Portfolios. Other fees may still apply, including mutual fund management fees and expenses, brokerage commissions, and other fees, as described in the *Charles Schwab Pricing Guide for Individual Investors* ("Pricing Guide"). This promotion only waives the annual IRA account service fee for Independent Investors described in the Pricing Guide. Diversification does not protect against market loss.

© 2005 Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. All rights reserved. Member SIPC.  
(1204-12566) ADS31555LIF1-02



THOMAS JEFFERSON  
Fought for a country.



ROSA PARKS  
Fought for a people.

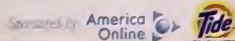
Thomas Jefferson and Rosa Parks are two people America has nominated to be the Greatest American. Go to America Online for in-depth, interactive profiles of the top 100. Then starting June 5, cast your vote for number one.

YOUR VOTE WILL DECIDE THE  
**GREATEST AMERICAN**

HOSTED BY MATT LAUER  
**SUNDAYS IN JUNE**  
STARTING JUNE 5, 8PM<sup>ET</sup>



20TH ANNIVERSARY



## SUNDAY DINNER

# Alton Brown's Buttermilk Biscuits



Brown with Grandma, 1965

“My grandmother's biscuits were the first food I tried to imitate in the kitchen. But mine tasted different. It took a while to realize that hers had been so tender because she had arthritis and couldn't knead the dough well. The secret: Go easy on the flour (the dough should be really wet). Then work it as little as possible. These biscuits are perfect with fried chicken or roast beef; or, at breakfast, serve them with raspberry or blueberry jam. And when the leftovers are getting a bit stale, split them in half, dab butter on top, then broil them until they're golden brown and crunchy. Which may be the very best way to eat them.” (AS TOLD TO CAITLIN COSTIN)

*Alton Brown hosts Good Eats on the Food Network. His latest cookbook is I'm Just Here for More Food.*

⌚ | PREPARATION TIME: 30 MINUTES | COOKING TIME: 15 TO 17 MINUTES | MAKES: 18 BISCUITS

**INGREDIENTS** » 2 cups all-purpose flour » 4 teaspoons baking powder » 1/2 teaspoon baking soda » 1 teaspoon salt » 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, frozen » 1 cup buttermilk » 1/3 cup plain yogurt » 1 large egg

**HEAT** oven to 450°F.

**MIX** flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt in a food processor; transfer to a large bowl. Place a cheese grater over bowl, and rub butter over grater's largest holes.

**TOSS** butter into flour gently, using hands. With fingers, rub in butter until about half disappears into flour and the rest has clotted into pea-sized bits. Put butter-flour mix in freezer.

**COMBINE** buttermilk, yogurt, and egg in a big bowl; stir well with a spatula. Add to butter-flour mix. Stir to form dough.

**DUST** a long piece of waxed paper lightly with flour. Place dough in middle; with paper's ends, gently form dough into a rectangle 1/2 inch to 1 inch thick. Use paper to fold the left third of dough over the middle, then the right third. Repeat 3 more times.

**CUT** dough into 2-inch rounds with an upside-down glass; reshape scraps and cut more biscuits. Place on an ungreased cookie sheet. Gently press down in biscuits' middles to barely dimple them.

**BAKE** until golden brown, 15 to 17 minutes. Serve hot.



PHOTOGRAPH (ABOVE) BY JIM FRANCO

# The power says major league MVP.

The new Nikon® Coolpix® S1. With more picture-taking ability than any other slim digital camera, courtesy of Nikon's Exclusive Feature System. 314° thin. Massive LCD screen. 5 megapixels. 3x optical zoom. Just \$379.95 MSRP. To learn more, go to [nikondigital.com](http://nikondigital.com).

©2005 Nikon Inc.

At the heart of the image.

**Nikon**

## MILESTONE

# Happy Birthday, Vegas!

This month marks Sin City's centennial: It was 100 years ago that an auction of 110 dusty acres in the Mojave Desert planted seeds for what's become a shimmering symbol of excess. Musicians, mobsters, and molls populate the legend. Today, stroller-pushing moms and dads, lured by roller coasters, water rides, and other over-the-top family fare, also make the scene. And what a scene it is.



The birth of Glitter Gulch: Gambling's legalization in 1931 turned Fremont Street into a bettor's paradise.



New York mobsters like Meyer Lansky, seen on a casino site in Vegas, went west in droves after World War II.



Jake Freedman, an owner of the Sands casino, with an off-duty showgirl at the roulette table, circa 1955.



Ring-a-ding: The Rat Pack's Dino, Sammy, and Frank set a tone of bawdy conviviality in the early '60s.



Today, families flock to Las Vegas for surreal fun and frolic in faux versions of Egypt, Paris, and, here, Venice.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: CORBIS; NY PESHIN GETTY IMAGES; LOOMIS DEAN; TIME LIFE PICTURES GETTY IMAGES; MARTIN PARR; MAGNUM PHOTOS; CORBIS







# MY FAVORITE ROOM... Ellen DeGeneres

Daytime's dancing queen  
pays tribute to the place  
in her house where people  
kick up their heels  
and let down their hair

**W**hen I was growing up in Louisiana, we never owned a house. We always rented. We didn't spend money on it. My attitude now is like buying houses [she laughs]. I like to move. I like architecture. Just when I saw a contemporary house and a Spanish-style house...

I haven't named it yet, even though I've been living there for a year. It was supposed to be an office, but then I saw it and decided I wanted it. The first thing I would specify is that sometimes I call it "the fun house" because that's what it is where everybody goes when their friends come over. It's just fun, which is fun for me. I'm really good, and I'm not really bad—all with one shot.

Before this room was on *Leno*, and after that I invited people over. It was just going to be four people, but it started getting exciting. I got a pool table, and it got more people kept calling more people. We didn't see in a while. We went until, like, 1 a.m., playing pool and dancing. When people came here, there's always been some funky playing—that's what Tupac and Eminem were all about. I put into everybody dancing. I had someone here for a while. They go, "God, that's so fun—we all ended up dancing. It happens every time we're together here, we end

me, the most important thing is to have a you want to be in all the time. At Christmas, [de Rossi, DeGeneres's girlfriend] and I just met. Her brother and his wife, who I'd met before, came over to spend Christmas us, along with my brother, his girlfriend, my mother. It was a recipe for disaster: No new one another. I didn't know if they'd But in the end, it was a really lovely day, just my brother and her brother getting along. That you picture when you see a scene in a and go, "Oh, wow, that looks nice." You feel you've successfully made a lovely home. ■

# House of Ellen

FE drills DeGeneres on the highs and lows of her home-improvement history



It's the craziest paint you've ever in a room? When I was 19, I my room lavender. Not as soothing as pink.

Best gadget in your right now? I have a plasma TV that out of the ceiling. Of course, my shoe-still amazes me to y.

Favorite tool? Phillips-head screw-It's all you need.

**Q.** Biggest pet peeve about a neighbor?

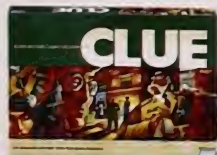
**A.** I had former neighbors who cut down huge, old, beautiful trees that were perfectly healthy!

**Q.** Messiest room in the house?

**A.** I'm actually very neat, although my scrapbooking room can get out of control.

**Q.** Snap decision: flat or semigloss?

**A.** Flat.



**Q.** Least used room?

**A.** I've stopped using my library because that's where Professor Plum killed Colonel Mustard with the candlestick... oh, I'm thinking of the game Clue.

**Q.** Best room to read in?

**A.** I have a screened-in sunporch that's perfect for reading. There's no better light than nature's glow. I'm being serious.

**Q.** It doesn't feel like home until...?

**A.** I hang my portrait over the fireplace.

**Q.** Favorite home show?

**A.** *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*. It's amazing and inspiring, and I can



get a week's worth of crying done in one night.

**Q.** Shades or drapes?

**A.** Both... and then I tack

a sheet over them for complete privacy.

**Q.** Which television show features

your favorite house?  
**A.** *Lost*.

**Q.** The worst interior decorating mistake you've ever made?  
**A.** The sheer drapes I bought that my cats immediately destroyed. And my faux-fur wall.



Ellen tools around.

# Same award-winning performance. Now available with a 5-CD Changer.



Shown with optional 5-CD Changer

When we introduced the Acoustic Wave® music system, audio critic Wayne Thompson called it "simply the best-sounding compact stereo system in captivity." *Sound & Vision* reported that it delivers "possibly the best-reproduced sound many people have ever heard." By offering the sound of a big, complicated stereo system – but from an all-in-one music system hardly the size of a briefcase – the Bose® Acoustic Wave® music system set a new industry standard.

So how did we make this award-winning system even better? By listening to owners and developing the CD changer they asked for. Engineered specifically for the Acoustic Wave® music system, our separate 5-CD Changer allows you to enjoy hours of music. You can even use it to connect other audio sources to your system – transforming it into a versatile audio center for movies, music and more.

## Lifelike sound – without interruption.

Our 5-CD Changer lets you savor the Acoustic Wave® music system's award-winning sound for hours on end. Load your five favorite CDs and press Play. You'll hear your music come to life with crystal clear highs and deep, enveloping lows that fill the room.



Patented acoustic waveguide speaker technology – which won the "Invention of the Year" award – is what allows the Acoustic Wave®

music system to deliver such a spacious, lifelike performance. And our 5-CD Changer lets you enjoy that room-filling sound without ever having to stop the music to change CDs.

## Beyond music – without complication.

Our 5-CD Changer also lets you connect your Acoustic Wave® system to additional audio sources and switch among them at the press of a button. Connect it to your TV, VCR, DVD player or computer – and enjoy Bose quality sound from everything you listen to or watch.

The Acoustic Wave® music system and 5-CD Changer were both designed for complete ease of operation. An AM/FM radio, CD player and three speakers are all built into the Acoustic Wave® music system, so there are no confusing wires to hook up or dials to adjust. And the credit card-sized remote control lets you operate the system and all CD-changer functions with ease.

## Try them for yourself, risk free.

Experience the Acoustic Wave® music system and our versatile, easy-to-use 5-CD Changer in the comfort of your own home for 30 days, satisfaction guaranteed. Call today and save \$150 when you order the Acoustic Wave® system together with our 5-CD Changer. Be sure to ask about the **new Bose payment plan**, which allows you to use your own major credit card to make a low down payment and 11 convenient monthly payments, with no interest charges from Bose.\*

The Acoustic Wave® music system and 5-CD Changer are available from Bose, the most respected name in sound.

**SAVE \$150 when you order the Acoustic Wave® music system with our 5-CD Changer by May 31, 2005.**

**TO ORDER OR LEARN MORE, CALL TODAY  
1-800-492-2073, ext. G6865**

Discover all our innovative products at  
**[www.bose.com/g6865](http://www.bose.com/g6865)**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Day Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Eve. Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail (Optional) \_\_\_\_\_

(Mail to: Bose Corp., Dept. DMG-G6865, The Mountain, Framingham, MA 01701-9168)

**BOSE®**  
Better sound through research®

\*Bose payment plan available on orders of \$299-\$1500 paid by major credit card. Down payment is 1/12 the product price plus tax. Then, your credit card will be billed for 11 equal monthly installments with 0% APR and no interest charges from Bose. Credit card rules and interest may apply. U.S. residents only. Limit one active financing program per customer. ©2005 Bose Corporation. Patent rights issued and/or pending. The Acoustic Wave® music system design is also a registered trademark of Bose Corporation. Financing and reduced price on 5-CD Changer package not to be combined with any other offer or applied to previous purchases, and subject to change without notice. Risk free refers to 30-day trial only and does not include return shipping. Delivery is subject to product availability. Quotes are reprinted with permission: Wayne Thompson, *Oregonian*, 8/15/89; Julian Hirsch, *Sound & Vision*, 3/85.



# OUR SEARCH FOR THE SIMPLE LIFE

WE WERE MARRIED ON THIS LAND. Nearby live the closest friends we have, as well as my only brother, his wife and children. For our entire adult lives, my husband, Chris, and I have resided within 10 miles of where we stand.

Our midwestern home is sited on 40 acres that Chris planted by hand and that burst each spring into wildflowers and grasses of periwinkle, purple, and gold. He'd designed our bedroom as a haven from which we could applaud the sunset, and rounded our kitchen to greet the sunrise as we made breakfast for our six kids. Together, we selected everything from the bricks that frame the door to the low lights that guide small feet on a bathroom trip in the middle of the night. It was everything we ever wanted in a home and more.

Too much more. Less than a year after moving in, we decided to sell the house of our dreams. The simplest explanation was that the house was too complicated. To keep up with the mortgage and the maintenance on our rural idyll, we found ourselves working at warp speed.

So we made an inventory of our expenses to see what could go: The kids already went to public school; their clothes were handed down. As for gourmet food, lobster on anniversaries was about it. Our only indulgence was the summers spent at the funny little house we own, on a rustic cul-de-sac a few miles from the ocean—and a thousand miles from here.

Our funny little house.

Before I married Chris, I was a widowed mother of four, living in a modest house on a crowded street. I wrote a novel that blessed me with a sudden windfall. When a beloved friend told me about a three-bedroom cottage just a shout away from her front porch and a beautiful ocean, I grabbed it. Summers there became the dessert we hungered for all year. Chris and I had two more children together, who also loved that funny little house. But loving a place is one thing. Affording it is another.

It became too clear. To keep our real home, our perfect paradise, with the hickory floors and the chandelier in the shape of a rain cloud, we'd have to sell the funny little house. Sadly, we began to contact Realtors.

SOON, THOUGH, I WAS HAVING DOUBTS. WE'D NEVER REALLY STOPPED TO think about why we'd chosen to live in this prairie palace. Yes, we'd been raised

**HUMONGOUS HOUSE ON THE PRAIRIE** The author (center) with husband Chris and five of their kids, in their custom-built Wisconsin home.

NOVELIST JACQUELYN MITCHARD LIVED HER DREAM OF BUILDING THE PERFECT HOUSE. BUT WHEN SHE AND HER FAMILY MOVED IN, THEY REALIZED IT WAS TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING. PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL EDWARDS

close by; yes, our families lived in the same time zone. But our visits were four times a year, not weekly.

And though my husband and I had never confided this to each other, each afraid to hurt the other's feelings, we both longed for a life we could more easily hold in our arms. The one we

were living felt unwieldy, overstuffed—not with people but with things. We ended up feeling silly in our grand house—not like the people we truly are. We felt as if our house demanded that we dress up.

Then, my son Dan received an odd homework assignment: He had to write his own epitaph. He wrote, "I died old, near the place I love most, the pond down the road behind the church, where I swam as a child and brought my children as a man." He wasn't describing our new house. He was describing the one we were about to sell.

NOW, CHRIS AND I HAD AN IDEA: IF WE COULD SELL THE HOUSE WE HAD just completed, we could cram ourselves into the little house we loved best, afford it, and work toward the future while enjoying the present. We held a family meeting and asked our kids to tell us the truth. It was painful to hear. "This house is too big," Francie, 9, said. "It has echoes."

"The downstairs is great for sleepovers," said Marty, 16. "But I liked neighbors. Why didn't you suggest this in the first place?"

The children had also felt distant in our opulent home—from us and from one another. They did have privacy, but what they really liked was bumping into one another, dancing to '80s music in the kitchen—as we did in that little house, all summer long.

And yet, the thought of giving up all that dreamed-of luxury—speakers that let us have music all around, walk-in closets jammed with clothes I wore once a year—was like spending two years writing a book and then hitting the delete button.


We gave our kids a final test. "You'll have to share rooms," we said.

They shrugged. We silently rejoiced, knowing that we wanted to raise the kind of kids who would, in turn, raise the kind of kids who wouldn't raise a fuss if told they had to share their rooms.

And so we put our august prairie villa on the market. I gutted my closet. Pruning 20 pairs of shoes down to 5 wasn't so hard. But when I culled my books, I wept, and when I culled the children's, I sobbed. The books we did keep were the shabbiest, but they were the ones signed from brother to brother to sister. Of course, books are just things; and we all say how shallow it is that stuff attaches itself to us like barnacles. The truth is, it hurts to dismantle the archaeology of eight lives. My grandmother had sewn that quilt. That bowl was my mother's, and my mother died when I was 19. Each child's memory box held a tiny first soccer jersey, a baptismal gown, school folders. Some things, no one should toss. So we did not.

The hardest part was to come. Saying good-bye to my brother, his family, my eldest son, now working full-time—no ocean waves could replace their laughter. Still, even a good choice comprises loss. This was a good choice, and a loss both big and real. But each step felt surer, more headed toward than away. As we looked forward to the life we would live, it felt more and more like a better fit for the people we honestly were.

And so we lit out for the territories. We brought only stuff enough to fill one moving van, enough memories and longing for those we left behind to fill a barge, and enough hope to hold a piece in each hand. ■



A shower  
curtain does  
double duty  
as a slipcover.  
Easy!

# 10

## HOME PROJECTS YOU CAN DO IN AN HOUR

Minimal fuss. Maximum impact. All you need are a few household items—and some clever design tricks.

BY DAN SHAW • PHOTOGRAPHS BY NGOC MINH NGO  
STYLED BY MICHELE MICHAEL

### SPRUCE UP YOUR SOFA IN 15 TO 20 MINUTES

A few skillful tucks of a bedspread can give your couch a surprisingly easy makeover. "Bedspreads are kid- and pet-friendly," says Connecticut decorator Bunny Williams—and almost as polished as slipcovers (at a fraction of the price).

**WHAT YOU NEED** 1 bedspread or other piece of fabric, as wide as your sofa is long >> pillows >> coordinating pillowcases or shams >> heavy-duty Velcro tape for fabric

#### THE STEPS

**LAY** fabric over seat and rear of couch, pattern-side up. Fold fabric around seat cushions and tuck edges securely underneath. Repeat with rear cushions.

**COVER** pillows with pillowcases (close with Velcro tape) or shams; place against backrest.

**OUR LOOK** Stylist Michele Michael suggests that during the dog days of summer, a shower curtain (woven, not plastic, of course!) is best equipped to stand up to punch-spilling kids and soggy swimsuits. Zinnia shower curtain (\$45) and Grove Stripe sham (\$34) from Garnet Hill (at [www.garnethill.com](http://www.garnethill.com)). Hopsack pillow from Crate & Barrel (\$30; at [www.crateandbarrel.com](http://www.crateandbarrel.com)).

### REVAMP YOUR KITCHEN IN 60 MINUTES\*

Why keep your best dishes and kitchen gadgets under wraps? Remove your cabinet doors, and not only will your kitchen look hipper, you'll see exactly where you put that salad bowl.

**WHAT YOU NEED** screwdriver >> wood filler >> putty knife >> fine-grain sandpaper >> paintbrush >> semigloss paint

#### THE STEPS

**SET** aside dishes and other contents. **REMOVE** doors with screwdriver. **PLUG** screw holes with wood filler, and scrape off excess with putty knife. **SMOOTH** cabinet frames with sandpaper, then paint them.

**LET** paint dry completely (see instructions on can). Repeat with second coat. (Note: You may need to apply primer before painting. Ask at a paint store for advice.)

**ARRANGE** cabinet contents by category (glasses, dishes, cookbooks, canned goods, etc.) and color.

**OUR LOOK** For a more extreme makeover, redo the interiors with a bright color. We used Benjamin Moore Waterborne Satin Impervo Enamel in Sun Porch (\$50 per gallon; call 800-672-4686 for stores). Scale from Crate & Barrel.

\*Does not include drying time



This ain't your great-aunt's centerpiece.



## RESET THE TABLE IN 5 TO 10 MINUTES

Forks, left. Spoons, right. Centerpieces, not in the middle anymore! Take full advantage of a table's length by lining up items—whether they're plants or votive candles—in a single row. It'll make the table look longer—and more inviting.

**OUR LOOK** Michele Michael used wheatgrass from a local farmer's market and arranged the spread on a Crate & Barrel Chardon tablecloth (\$25 and up; at [www.crateandbarrel.com](http://www.crateandbarrel.com)).

Instant makeover: a shock of orange.



## BRIGHTEN YOUR BATHROOM IN 40 TO 60 MINUTES\*

To overhaul a lackluster bathroom, simply add a splashy vanity color.

**WHAT YOU NEED** screwdriver  
» paintbrush » semigloss or high-gloss latex paint

### THE STEPS

**REMOVE** vanity doors' hinge screws and knobs (if possible).

**PAINT** vanity and doors; let dry (see instructions on can). Add a second coat. (Note: You may need to apply primer before painting. Ask at a paint store for advice.) Let dry overnight.

**REATTACH** doors and knobs to vanity.

**OUR LOOK** An unconventional color heightens the effect: Benjamin Moore Impervex Latex High Gloss Metal and Wood Enamel in Citrus Orange (\$43 per gallon; call 800-672-4686 for stores).

*\*Does not include drying time*



## ORGANIZE YOUR PORCH IN 30 TO 45 MINUTES\*

Having to run inside for sunblock or a sweater spoils the outdoor fun. Instead, keep everything within arm's reach with roomy totes hung on Shaker pegs. Bonus: no more clutter.

**WHAT YOU NEED** pine board (1 inch thick, and as long and wide as you like)  
» pencil » ruler » level » power drill with 1/2-inch bit » wood glue » Shaker pegs » paint (optional) » 2 No. 8 screws (2 1/2 inches) » bags

### THE STEPS

**DETERMINE** where to hang each bag

pencil (use ruler and level to make sure points are equidistant and even). **DRILL** holes 3/8 inch into board; glue in pegs; let dry overnight. Paint if desired; let dry.

**MARK** where you'd like to place screws on board, with the help of level. Then drill board into wall and hang bags.

**OUR LOOK** We matched our new rack to the color of the house, then coordinated it with summery totes, one for each member of the family. Pegs from Shaker Workshops (\$8 per dozen; order at 800-840-9121). Pine board available at Lowe's. Totes from Hable (\$150 and up; order at 212-343-8555).



on that comes with VESicare before you start  
ou get a refill. There may be new information,  
the place of talking with your doctor or other  
about your condition or treatment. Only your  
professional can determine if treatment with

medicine used in adults to treat the following  
ion called overactive bladder:  
room too often, also called "urinary frequency,"  
to go to the bathroom right away, also called

ients, also called "urinary incontinence,"  
died in children.

adder?

rs when you cannot control your bladder  
muscle contractions happen too often or cannot  
f symptoms of overactive bladder, which are  
urgency, and urinary incontinence (leakage).

VESicare?

ou:  
your bladder (also called "urinary retention"),  
emptying of your stomach (also called "gastro-

tem called "uncontrolled narrow-angle  
e or any of its ingredients. See the end of this  
list of ingredients.

doctor before starting VESicare?

tell your doctor or healthcare professional  
conditions including if you:  
estral problems or problems with constipation,  
your bladder or you have a weak urine stream,  
called narrow-angle glaucoma.

g to become pregnant (It is not known if  
ur unborn baby),  
not known if VESicare passes into breast milk  
baby. You should decide whether to breastfeed  
or both).

e, tell your doctor about all the medicines  
ption and nonprescription medicines,  
plements. While taking VESicare, tell your  
ersonal about all changes in the medicines  
nonprescription and nonprescription medicines,  
plements. VESicare and other medicines

icare?

prescribed. Your doctor will prescribe the  
our doctor may prescribe the lowest dose if  
conditions such as liver or kidney problems.  
ESicare tablet once a day.  
re with liquid and swallow the tablet whole.  
with or without food.  
VESicare, begin taking VESicare again the  
2 doses of VESicare in the same day.  
icare or overdose, call your local Poison  
gency room right away.

side effects with VESicare?

ffects with VESicare are:  
caution while driving or doing dangerous  
w how VESicare affects you.

r doctor if you get severe stomach area  
come constipated for 3 or more days.  
prostration (due to decreased sweating) can  
as VESicare are used in a hot environment.

ve any side effects that bother you or that

ffects with VESicare. For more information,  
re professional or pharmacist.

icare?

er medications out of the reach of children.  
temperature, 50°F to 86°F (15° to 30° C),  
re that is out of date or that you no longer need.

out VESicare?

s prescribed for conditions that are not  
ormation leaflets. Do not use VESicare for  
was not prescribed. Do not give VESicare  
they have the same symptoms you have. It

the most important information about  
re more information, talk with your doctor,  
r pharmacist for information about VESicare  
h professionals. You can also call (800)  
www.VESICARE.com.

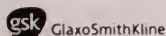
nts in VESicare?

se monohydrate, corn starch, hypromellose  
e, talc, polyethylene glycol 8000 and  
ow ferrous oxide (5 mg VESicare tablet) or red  
re tablet).

es, Inc., Norman, Oklahoma 73072

eld, Illinois 60015

Triangle Park, North Carolina 27709



and  
of Companies.

VSC15SR0

Cushions  
from a picnic  
bench get  
comfy indoors.



## KID-SIZE A BOOKCASE IN 10 TO 15 MINUTES

Want to encourage your kids to read?  
Bring shelves down to their level—and  
create a library all their own.

**WHAT YOU NEED** sturdy modular  
cubes >> heavy-duty Velcro tape  
>> bench cushions

## THE STEPS

**LINE** cubes along wall.  
**TAPE** cushions to cubes with Velcro.

**OUR LOOK** A sunny menagerie. Cubes  
(\$69 each; No. 6183164) and cushions  
(\$49 per pair; No. 6804389) from West  
Elm (at [www.westelm.com](http://www.westelm.com)). Hold  
Everything boxes. Garnet Hill baskets.  
Books courtesy of Barnes & Noble.



## BUILD A TRELLIS IN 45 TO 60 MINUTES

Plants filling a once-blank wall turn a  
drab porch into a garden room.

**WHAT YOU NEED** 5 strips of plywood  
(¾ inch thick and as long as you like,  
but 2 strips—your vertical pieces—  
should be at least 10 inches longer  
than the others) >> pencil >> ruler  
>> power drill >> 6 screws (1¼ inches)  
>> 4 screws (2 inches) >> deep crate

## THE STEPS

**MEASURE** with ruler where horizontal  
strips should attach to vertical strips,  
and mark with pencil (lowest horizon-  
tal should be placed higher than crate).  
**PLACE** verticals behind horizontals;  
drill in 1¼-inch screws in back.  
**ATTACH** trellis to back of crate by  
drilling one 2-inch screw near bottom  
of planter and one near top (on each  
vertical strip).  
**TRANSPLANT** potted climbing flow-  
ers to crate.

**OUR LOOK** Ask your nursery for a  
discarded crate (you can't beat that  
price!). Wood available at Lowe's.

# Are You the Picture of Health?

"You might look and feel fine, but you need to get the inside story.

Colorectal cancer often has no symptoms, so please get tested. I did."

*Katie Couric, Co-Founder  
EIF's National Colorectal Cancer Research Alliance*

Screening can detect precancerous polyps so they can be removed **before** they turn into colorectal cancer.

If you're 50 or older, talk to your doctor and get screened.



Call: 1 (888) 842-6355 • Visit: [www.cdc.gov/screenforlife](http://www.cdc.gov/screenforlife)



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



# The MUPPETS' WIZARD of OZ

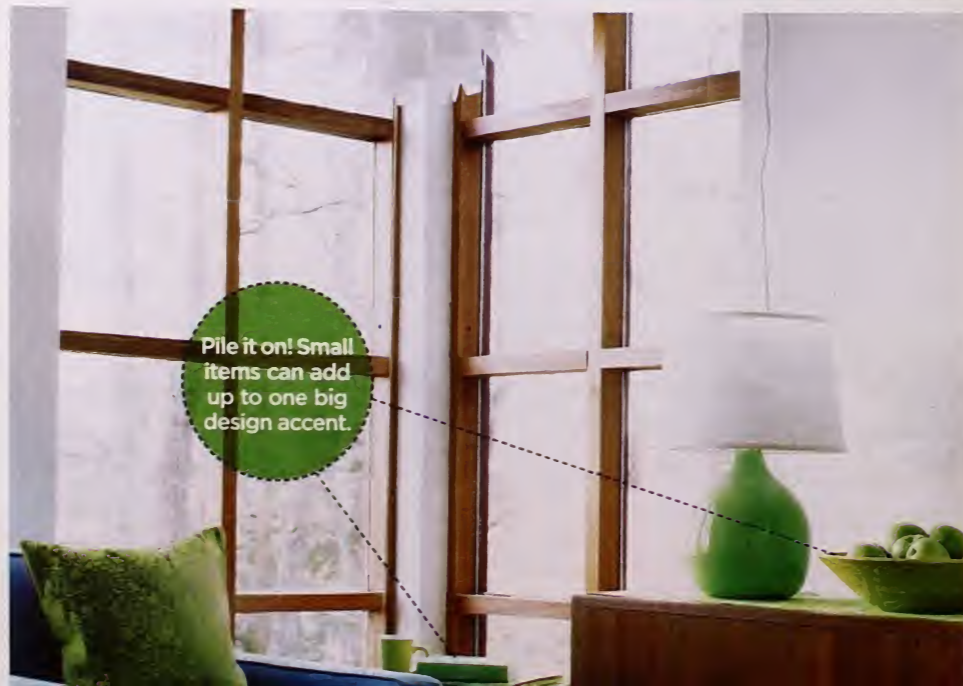
EVERYONE'S FAVORITE STORY BECOMES ONE TWISTED TALE.



## MATCH UP ACCESSORIES IN 45 MINUTES

If you want to change the color of a room but don't feel like painting, get the effect by sprinkling same-hued accessories throughout the space. Use objects as small as lamps and vases or as large as an area rug. "Choose a shade you love, and spread it all around," advises Christopher Lowell, the host of Discovery Home Channel's *The Christopher Lowell Show*. You may not even have to go shopping. Start by taking inventory of your closets, cupboards, even your garage—you could discover a color statement in the making.

**OUR LOOK** Because this is also a low-commitment way to experiment, we went bold here, picking char- treuse accessories. Carnivale Green table lamp from Crate & Barrel (\$70; at [www.crateandbarrel.com](http://www.crateandbarrel.com)). Potluck serving bowl from Global Table (\$74; at [www.globaltable.com](http://www.globaltable.com)). Rug from Bowron Sheepskin (\$79 and up; at [www.rugsusa.com](http://www.rugsusa.com)). Chinese brocade pillow fabric from B and J Fabrics (\$21 per yard; order at 212-354-8150).



Pile it on! Small items can add up to one big design accent.



No power drill needed—not even a hammer.

## DESIGN A HEADBOARD IN 40 TO 60 MINUTES

Your bedroom's a snooze? Doug Wilson, host of TLC's *Moving Up*, likes to liven things with a fabric headboard.

**WHAT YOU NEED** ¾-inch-thick plywood (6 inches wider than bed, as high as you like) >> 1 package ¾-inch cotton batting (at least 6 inches wider and longer than plywood) >> scissors >> tape measure >> staple gun >> fabric (same size as batting)

### THE STEPS

**PLACE** batting on floor with plywood on top. Trim so it's 3 inches wider than wood on all sides. Fold over onto wood; staple.

**LAY** fabric pattern-side down. Place batting side of wood on fabric. Trim so it's 6 inches wider than wood on all sides. Pull fabric taut; fold over onto wood; staple. Place board behind bed.

**OUR LOOK** A chic boutique hotel. Marimekko Kivet Red fabric (\$42 per yard; at [www.kiitosmarimekko.com](http://www.kiitosmarimekko.com)). Plywood available at the Home Depot. Batting from the Warm Company. Signature Hemstitched Percale bedding from Garnet Hill (\$30 and up; at [www.garnethill.com](http://www.garnethill.com)).

## FAKE A BIG WINDOW IN 40 TO 50 MINUTES

Let there be light—or just the appearance of it—with this nifty trick. By hanging a curtain rod a little north of the frame, your window will suddenly seem bigger. "It's a marvelous illusion," says Debbie Travis of HGTV's *Debbie Travis' Facelift*.

**WHAT YOU NEED** stepladder >> ruler >> 2 brackets with screws (or 3 if curtain rod is especially long) >> pencil >> power drill >> stud finder >> curtain panels (wide enough to span window, with material left to gather) >> 1 curtain rod (2 to 4 feet longer than window)

### THE STEPS

**MEASURE** 10 inches higher than top of window, then 10 inches wider on each side of window. Mark with pencil, then install brackets by drilling screws into mark. (For dry-wall, use stud finder to be sure your mark is over a stud; if not, move bracket closer to window.)

**SLIP** curtains over rod and hang. **POSITION** curtains at edges of window so fabric gathers at the sides.

**OUR LOOK** To accentuate the airiness of the room, we hung gauzy Contour



What a difference 10 inches makes!

Line Embroidered curtains from Garnet Hill (\$38 and up per panel; at [www.garnethill.com](http://www.garnethill.com)) on a Solid Wood rod with brackets (\$35 and up) and finials (\$40 a pair) from Restoration Hardware (at [www.restorationhardware.com](http://www.restorationhardware.com)). Stinson Stripe Cotton Mat from Pottery Barn. ■

so easy you can do it  
with your eyes closed

talking caller ID



# Attention, Shoppers!

There are nine subtle differences between these two photographs. Search high and low (don't forget the floor!) to see how many you can find.



A

B

C







Room with a cue:  
chez DeGeneres

**W**hen I was growing up in Louisiana, we moved every two years. We never owned. We always rented. We didn't buy things. We didn't spend money. We just saved it. My attitude now is: *Spend* it. I really like buying houses [this is her eleventh]. I like to move. I like change. I like architecture. Just when I think I like a contemporary house, I change to a Spanish-style house or a traditional.

I haven't named this room yet, even though I've been working on it for a year. It was supposed to be an office, but then I started liking it and decided I wanted it to be something I would spend time in. So sometimes I call it "the office," but a fun house is what it is. It's the place where everybody gravitates. When friends come over, we play pool, which is fun for me. Sometimes I'm really good, and then I can be equally bad—all within the span of one shot.

# MY FAVORITE ROOM...

## Ellen DeGeneres

Daytime's dancing queen pays tribute to the place in her house where people kick up their heels and let down their hair

Before this room was finished, I was on *Leno*, and after the show, I invited people over. At first, it was just going to be four of us. Then I started getting excited about the pool table, and it got out of hand. I kept calling more people I hadn't seen in a while. We all hung out until, like, 1 a.m., playing pool and dancing. When people come over here, there's always something funky playing—that night, it was Tupac and Eminem—and it turns into everybody dancing. If there's someone here for the first time, they go, "God, that was so much fun—we all ended up dancing!" But it happens every time people get together here, we end up dancing. >

As told to Margy Rochlin ● Photographs by Guy Aroch



© 2007 American Express Company. All rights reserved.

AMERICAN  
EXPRESS

Ellie D. Q.

My LIFE. MyCARD.